# Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council September 10 & 11, 2008

**Members Present**: Connie Sturgis, Cindy O'Dell, Libby Hancock, Sandra Morris, Shelly Meyer, Ann Tribby, Dale Mahugh, Anne Carpenter, Jeanette Hall, Shelly Fisher, Judy Kendall, Brenda Hergott sitting in for Sheilah Mevis, Barb Perzinski, Stephanie Goetz, Wendy Cornell, Terry Minnow, Roy Kemp, Dave Cook, Patty West, Melissa Faber, Carrie Leu, Mary Jane Standaert, Dan McCarthy, 2<sup>nd</sup> day - Russ Temple

**Staff:** Melody Olson, Chauntel Lucier, Jamie Palagi, Chris Hettinger, Lisa Murphy, Linda Kjorstad, Angi Rayfield

**Guests:** Roger Wright, Christy Hill Larson, Kim Richter, Jane Arnson-Shoemacher, Ann Klaas, Hank Hudson, Theresa DeStefano, Colette Box, Sharon DeBrito, Becky Fleming Siebenaler.

**Budget Overview:** Chris Hettinger gave a budget overview of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), the total budgeted amount was not spent in Fiscal year 2008. The CCDF has flexibility to spend money that is not spent in one year – 2 years to obligate and 3 years to spend, so that is helpful to carry it forward. The carry over has been targeted to address some activities of the ECSB including QRIS, fingerprinting supports, and potential CCUBS enhancements to assist with QRIS. The School Age MOST grant is TANF direct dollars and does not require TANF or CCDF eligibility and has been very successful. In addition, there are some TANF changes that might keep some people on TANF child care longer.

**Action Item**: Libby asked that we get a written summary of how the MOST dollars are being used.

#### **ECSB Updates:**

<u>Economic Impact Reports</u> – are complete, distributed to many, workforce investment board is very interested in early childhood and responsive to this report. Washington Foundation is still involved. Presentations can be made on this report with a power point, if you want the power point please let ECSB know. We will be taking the next steps to follow through on recommendations made in report. We have the momentum with some business interest and we need to keep this report in the public awareness. **Action Item**: Invite a rep from Workforce Investment Board to our next meeting.

QRIS – staff working on document plan, working with quality committee, provider forums have been conducted, and many issues identified – such as business management issues, more work/less money issues, etc. By next week the document should be on website as a draft for comments. Nov. 5&6 there will be a provider summit in Helena and 5 reps from each group will be invited to refine the QRIS plan.

**ORIS** Communication Plan – Handout

The quality committee met in July and recommended to keep the 5 stars, focus on child outcomes, no pilot per se but will be called pilot to work out problems before it goes into rule.

Action Item: Call it a field test, people will be more open to it.

**Functional Cost analysis of CCR&Rs** – Bureau put out an RFP and did not get a good response. The study would analyze R&R costs and work, service area, etc. Will probably have to RFP, unless we can sole source based on the unique requests and experiences. If an RFP goes out, make sure that colleges get it because it would be a great project for a professor and some graduate students.

**ECSB staff position:** ECSB needs a new position focused on error rates. This would be a Quality Assurance/Program Integrity position, focused on policy, admin reviews, accounts receivable and back up for CCUBS and LUP work. Bureau also advertised for CC Supervisor **Action Item:** Send Sandra Morris job announcements with salary amounts.

**CACFP Reauthorization -** We have an opportunity to identify issues that are affecting major parts of the child care provider population. Both Shelly Fisher and Roger offered to help Judy Kendall. **Action Item**: A letter could be written by the Program Policy Committee.

**Executive Planning Process** (**EPP**) – Dept made recommendations and Governor's Office is working on budget requests. There is a series of priorities. CACFP is a present law adjustment just asking permission to spend \$ coming into the state. Poverty index adjustment, yearly market rate survey, and maintain case load - \$3mil. New proposal – position FTE. Additional Quality \$1mil did not make it in. TANF working caretaker relative to continue – no increase.

**Head Start Collaboration/ECCS update** – Mary Jane shared about the newly required Collaboration Needs Assessment of how Head Start/Early Head Start programs work in their communities in all eight target areas plus professional development.

**Public Comment** - Anne Carpenter offered voting posters

QAD Update: Becky Fleming Siebenaler reported - Role of licensing in QRIS, potential rule changes might be requiring SIDS training, presently doing the research and gathering data. Will conduct some provider forums on SIDS and Safe Sleep. Playground safety is another change they are looking into. Some policy updates are needed on mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse. QAD is seeking a Licensing credential – a national program for all human service licensing staff. University of Maine has the first courses on line. A career track for licensors. All licensors in Montana will be taking the courses to become credentialed. There was a variety of questions regarding criminal background checks. Some R&Rs provide finger printing. People can be trained by the Dept. of Justice to do the rolling of prints.

**Action Item:** Becky will do an information session on disqualifiers. Jamie would add Appeals process in LUP. Indian Child Welfare character references would also be a good idea to bring into the discussion.

Becky reminded MECAC that the mission of QAD is to keep children safe first and foremost and, to work with providers in coming into compliance and to respect due process rights. Becky reminded the council that if there are specific concerns about licensing actions, to please work with QAD directly. Stephanie reported on a variety of statistics for child care licensing. QAD is required to do 20% random annual checks (182) but they did 349 last year. The items that were

most deficient were: first aid, pediatric health statement, infant feeding schedule, immunes and fire safety. Would like to post top 20 deficiencies on web site. Libby asked that we do not use the word random, because 20% sample is really targeted and rotated. **Action Item:** Stephanie will get data to Jamie for minutes. Stephanie also shared that through Sanswrite, the web portal, is ready to in which plans of correction and deficiency reports will be posted. Will be ready for use by Oct. 1, 2008.

# Child Care Licensing Program SFY08 Statistics

- FY08 stats
  - o 182 20% inspections were required
  - o 349 20% inspections completed (38%)
  - o Top 5 deficiencies
    - First Aid Requirements (policies, kit, portable kit)
    - Physical Examination (Pediatric Health Statement)
    - Infant Feeding Schedule
    - Immunizations
    - Fire safety (lack of fire extinguisher, smoke detector not mounted, inadequate smoke detectors, smoke detectors not mounted)
  - o 1232 facilities (520 FDC, 469 GDC, 243 DCC)
  - o 273 extended (25 FDC, 62 GDC, 186 DCC)
  - o 914 inspections (includes: 20%, attempted, complaint, follow-up, intitial/20%, initial, renewal and routine)
  - New Applications
    - 234 received
    - 191 approved (others pending, incomplete, denied, withdrawn)
- FY09-180 inspections required

**Public Comment**: Roger Wright from Great Falls explained his business and how half day Kindergarten children at full day rates has kept them in business. All day K has greatly impacted his business. Roger shared his concerns and frustrations around the cost to provide child care and vacancies that make it even more difficult on the bottom line. Roger discussed the need to recruit and retain qualified staff.

Further dialogue continued within the council regarding Roger's comments. Communication about readiness has to happen at the local level. School Readiness, Shrinking recruitment pool, ratios/compensation are major issues. EC needs to be thought of as education just as K-12 and higher ed. The problem is today, we need at least a temporary solution today, not in 1 or 2 years.

**QRIS:** Jamie shared data on providers/caregiver use of quality dollars and projected numbers for every additional \$100,000 based on the proposal from the quality committee; this is still in the draft stage. There were many ideas for a name for the QRIS, committees will vote and recommend to full council a name for the QRIS. A decision will be made in full council on day 2.

Second Day – Public Policy and Quality met together to decide about a Public Awareness Campaign with Banik.

Montana Advocates for Children (MAC) – Jeanette Hall gave an update. MAC intends to support the initiatives of the ECSB. In addition, MAC plans to independently seek support and lobby for additional QRIS funds. MAC also plans to support the seat belt issue as a primary offense and expansion of CHIP and Medicaid for children. MAC is not an agenda of the DPHHS ECSB, rather they asked for time to give a report to the council on their activities and next steps.

**Public Awareness Campaign** – Ronda Banik showed examples of a previous campaign that they created for DPHHS on infant hearing screening. Ronda wants to know what we would like to see in a campaign on I/T. Suggestions: Safe Sleep, I/T Guidelines, Born Learners, Need for educated workforce and parents, want all parents to be able to learn something from the campaign, I/T classes have materials that might be helpful, what I/T need, (Smart Start Colorado), do some partnering with others interested in aspects of I/T development, something engaging like the Fatherhood ad that Anne Carpenter mentioned, newspaper ads that run for a long period of time, TV is expensive and must be professional, use doctors offices, produce a cover for a packet of material that would be given to parents, doctors prefer brochures over posters, comfort rooms at Child Find.

What do we want people to know? I/T guidelines. Do you have your copy of Early Learning Guidelines? What are you going to do with your baby when you go to work? Convince audience that they have a need. "Best Beginnings for Babies". Check on info from other states. Should we be looking for other money and partners? Meth ads \$ could contribute with message that babies are not born addicted.

At this point, all committees met respectively to address further agenda items.

### **Public Policy Committee**

**Members Present:** Mary Jane Standaert, Teresa DeStefano, Dale MaHugh, Connie Sturgis, Anne Carpenter, Russ Temple, Dan McCarthy, Roy Kemp, Becky Fleming Siebenaler.

**QRIS**: Best Beginnings Quality System suggested by two people and chosen by committee. This committee wants a discussion about QRIS and how it disseminates incentives between facilities and individual staff.

The committee reviewed two articles from CLASP (Center for Law and Social Policy) related to ratios and group sizes in family child care and infants/toddlers care. Becky shared that QAD is looking at changing definition of infant to 0-18 months. QAD is not interested in changing ratios as the fire marshal would not support increasing ratios. QAD had to respond to Rep. Brown who wanted to increase ratios. Providers would end up losing money, so it would be a sole package in legislation which people could support or not. QAD/ECSB partnered to conduct listening forums and found that providers want the definition changed. They will craft a rule, provide public comment, public hearing. Action Item: Anne requests that ECSB and QAD figure out a fiscal impact statement as she feels that change in definition will affect provider payments. Let QAD and ECSB work out the details and then bring to MECAC.

Mary Jane brought up a discussion about multiple ages in center classrooms. QAD has a policy about multiple ages allowed for short periods of time that fits the needs of program and children. A program should have a sensible program policy and propose to QAD. Becky said that they are looking at different ways to require the SIDS training for all providers. Connie suggested that it be required more than once, providers need to be continually reminded.

# **Program Policy Committee**

**Members Present**: Angi Rayfield, Patty West, Carrie Leu, Val Mattfeldt, Barb Perzinski, Melody Olsen, & Chauntel Lucier – Visitors: Veronica Moldenhauer, Kim Richter

A discussion occurred regarding the name for the Quality Rating System for Montana. Our choice is Best Quality Improvement System

A discussion was held regarding the sliding fee scale and how can we better help our families & serve needs. Other public assistance programs have varying sliding fee scales and cut off income levels. The biggest concern is those individuals that are right at the line just over eligibility. The impact to single parent families and 2 parent families, is that they are turning away small raises and job advances because they would lose their child care eligibility. What if we increased the upper end of the eligibility guidelines? Concerns discussed included: are we always going to have the cliffs no matter what percentage we use as the cut off? What would be the fiscal impact of changing eligibility at above 150% of poverty? Would this cause a waiting list?

#### **Action Steps**

- o Ask ECSB to calculate 175% of FPI. To see what this impact would have.
- o Take this issue to the CCR&R network for further discussion on tracking for a period of time on those denied for over income at a certain amount.
- o Look at standard deductions & what may be possible within the current budget or how much it would put us over the budget.

#### **FBI Audit:**

Angi Rayfield gave a report on the FBI Audit recently conducted on the Criminal Justice Information Network and fingerprinting for background checks. A recommendation from the audit was to tighten the chain of custody regarding fingerprint cards. Fingerprints come from a variety of sources

- CCR&R's
- Police Stations
- OPA offices
- Gov't offices

# **Action Step** to look at for Chain of Custody: Ways to minimize, but not eliminate the problem:

- Possibility of fingerprinting at New Provider Orientation & advertising this is occurring
- Bringing this discussion to the CCR&R Network Director's and to the LUP processors.
- As part of picking up the fingerprint cards a self addressed envelope be attached that once the fingerprint card is done it is dropped in the envelope at that time & sent in directly.
- o Talk to the Law Enforcement Association and find out what they would suggest.
  - Perhaps to set a certain rate across the state.

#### **Attestation:**

Angi Rayfield discussed the process of attestation as it relates to LUP/LUI providers. Currently attestation documents have been used in lieu of getting the actual information from an agency entity in a timely manner or at all, this is usually in reference to other states. The attestation form needs to be revised.

- o Recommend that a place is added to the document for the notary seal.
- o If we are going to do something like this we need a statement in policy about attestation.
- o Change the wording to address what is in the provider's background

#### **Action Step**

- This committee recommends that for policy purposes we need to have the written attestation and a policy related to this be done.
- o A draft of the attestation document & the Policy will be done prior to the October Family Services conference call & be presented at this time.

\*\* During full council, Jamie clarified with this committee that ECSB was really looking to this committee to discuss whether attestations should be used or not with LUP/LUI.

#### The committee drafted a letter for the reauthorization of the CACFP:

The Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council (MECAC), whose mission is to provide leadership and advocacy assuring access to quality early childhood and school-age care and education for all children, their families and their communities would like to make the following recommendation to the USDA Food Nutrition Service as they relate to the Child and Adult Care Food Program and the key issue of insuring all eligible persons have access to program benefits.

With respect to the tiering process for family and group day care home providers, we would respectfully request that tiering be eliminated. The process tends to impede providers from receiving the greatest reimbursement rate for the meals they serve to children when based on school district 50% free and reduced designation.

In a very rural state like Montana, many districts consolidate grade levels by building rather than residential areas so that school boundary lines are not indicative of economic levels. In addition, when smaller districts must close their doors due to economic challenges, children may be bussed to schools in higher economic areas where providers no longer qualify for the higher reimbursement.

In addition, direct care providers qualifying as Tier II decline participation in the MT CACFP and thus reduce the number of slots potentially available to families received assistance with child care costs because the low rate of reimbursement does not justify the record keeping time investment. The result is that the nutrition safety net does not reach to the most at risk children and families.

Other statements to add to this letter:

- ♣ Illustrate why this is not working. Some documentation may be needed.
- ♣ GDC that are not doing care out of a home i.e. church etc. be reconsidered for eligibility.
- ♣ We would like to recommend that Mary Musil review this letter prior to it being sent and then Jamie & Dale review and approve.
- ♣ Remember to add the out of residence GDC/FDC and why this is important to the nutritional needs of children.
- ♣ If the State recognizes these facilities as a FDC/GDC that should be taken into consideration.
- How about Centers?
  - o Issue is free, reduced payment in the reimbursement rate.
  - o Income guidelines.

#### **LUP Process Discussion**

- ☐ It is the recommendation of this committee that the next time a joint meeting occurs with ECSB & QAD a discussion will occur for some consistency on the background checks and the age to which we go back between LUP and registered/licensed care.
- ♣ We would like a report brought back to where this discussion is headed.

#### **CACFP Policy: Business Hours Care:**

♣ The policy was revised and is in place.

We missed Kim Whiteman as a member of our committee and look forward to seeing her in January.

#### **Quality Committee**

**Members present:** Ann Tribby, Sandra Morris, Libby Hancock, Shelly Fischer, Judy Kendall, Shelly Meyer, Stephanie Goetz, Jeannette Hall,

ECSB staff members: Jamie Palagi, Lisa Murphy, Chris Hettinger, Linda Kjorstad

Guests: Ann Klaas, Sharon DiBrito, Collette Box

Voted on name for program-Best Beginnings STARS to Quality

Positive climate and teacher sensitivity, & behavior management- look at these more closely in CLASS

STARS will drive training – our focus should be on what is required for STARS

May want to look at both ERS and CLASS and pick areas we want to focus on.

NAEYC focusing on relations with CLASS Do we need to look at ERS at lower stars and then moving to CLASS (mentoring piece)?

ERS in self study and move into CLASS as we get more specific; can't forget peer to peer

Look at Decisions/principles page and change wording in that paragraph at Star I level.

Priority of how facilities enter:

HS-what % of whole are these centers and we fund that number reflect possibilities down road to have documentation for legislation

Make incentives smaller – so that more facilities can participate Amounts of \$\$ need contract with plan for how it will be spent – higher levels \$\$ go towards caregiver compensation

Entry 3 different ways spoken about:

Lottery, longevity, merit (different regions, resources offered to providers)

Current star providers -

App time limit and then divide \$\$ for incentives

Look at future and how will we fund; need a plan

Mentoring (Leadership) –pay back at higher level – with \$\$ offered at that level

Look at non-negotiable issues

Go back to drawing board on whether to separate \$\$ for caregivers and facilities Separating out Funds for workforce and funds for quality program (looking at incentive proposals for Registry – caregivers would have incentives at different levels on PR (facilities) Input from MtAEYC:

- Big jump from Star 1 to Star 2
- Love the concrete tools for assessment
- Avenue for on going conversations as to ready to go on to higher level
- NAEYC accreditation pitfalls:
  - o Under environments playground inspector –this has been issue
  - o benefits for staff

- o written curriculum
- o Family Community partnerships
- NAFCC accreditation pitfalls:
  - o Training hours (must have 90 hours in the last 3 years)

# MtAEYC accreditation committee suggestions:

- On pg 11 expand on "each child observed 1 time"
- Put MECAC mission statement on STAR program

#### Tool Kit additions:

- ✓ Make suggestions on creative ways of using dollars (i.e. sliding fee scale for facilities to use for families)
- ✓ Decal for participation in STARS with a certificate for each level that a facility achieves

#### ECSB tasks:

- By Oct. 15 have NAFCC & NAEYC start at Level 5 and go backwards to check if there are stepping stones at each level for accreditation achievement
- Go through and cut incentives by certain percentages

Small Group the Dept can work with prior to the public release for comment will consist of: Ann Tribby, Libby Hancock, Judy Kendall and Shelly Fischer to approve the draft that will go public on October 15.

## **Full council Day Two**

Committee Reports were shared with the full council and further discussion continued regarding committee recommendations. The next MECAC meeting is January 7 and 8, 2009. There are some positions that are up for reappointment, this process will occur in November and December. As a reminder, the working document of STARS is not ready to be copied and given out, the public release will serve as that option.